

SLAVEHOLDING NOT SINFUL.

3.

AN ARGUMENT

BEFORE THE

GENERAL SYNOD

OF THE

Reformed Protestant Dutch Church,

OCTOBER, 1855.

BY

SAMUEL B. HOW, D.D.,

PASTOR OF THE FIRST REFORMED DUTCH CHURCH, NEW-BRUNSWICK, N. J.

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A R E L A T I O N

OF

CIRCUMSTANCES THAT CALLED FORTH THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS.

THE Author of the following address to the General Synod of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of North America, deems it proper to state: that at the meeting of the Synod in the City of New-Brunswick in June last, "a communication was received from the North-Carolina Classis of the German Reformed Church, purporting to be a certified copy of their action in reference to seeking an ecclesiastical connection with the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, which was referred to the Committee on Correspondence," of which he was the chairman. That committee recommended to Synod the adoption of the following resolution:

"Resolved, That Synod cordially reciprocate the fraternal feelings expressed by the Classis of North-Carolina of the German Reformed Church; that they regard with favor their proposal of effecting an ecclesiastical relation with our Church; and that so soon as they present duly-authenticated testimonials of their accepting its standards and constitution, they shall be received as one of its integral parts, and so be fully incorporated with it, and shall be known among us as the German Reformed Classis of North-Carolina, of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of North-America."

The Report recommending this resolution was accepted. But when it was moved to adopt the above resolution, debate followed, and it was discussed at some length; when Rev. Thornton Butler, who had been recognized by Synod as the Commissioner from the North-Carolina Classis, perceiving from the debate that several members of the Synod were opposed to forming a connection with them, withdrew the application of the Classis. He was afterwards requested,

by a resolution of the Synod, to "reconsider the withdrawal of his papers, and leave them in the hands of the Synod until their meeting in October next : whereupon he consented to leave them in the hands of the Synod, subject to the advice of his Classis." According to the report of the *New-York Tribune*, of June 16, 1855, there were two principal objections raised against the receiving of the Classis by the Synod ; the one was, that it was inexpedient to do so, because it would endanger the peace of the Church, and expose it to being distracted by the agitation of the question of slavery. This was urged by Rev. Dr. Wyckoff, of Albany, and Rev. Dr. Bethune, of Brooklyn. The other was, that slaveholding is a sin, and that we ought not to hold communion with slaveholders. This objection was urged by Rev. Isaac G. Duryee, of Schenectady, who said, that he had "conscientious scruples against the formation of such a relation." According to the *Tribune*, he declared as follows : "I can say that my inmost soul shrinks from the idea of our extending the fellowship of our church to slaveholding churches as I shrink from the touch of the torpedo," etc., etc. The writer of this was not aware at the time that there were any Abolitionists among the ministers of the Reformed Dutch Church, or that such feelings as those expressed by Rev. Mr. Duryee existed in the minds of any members of the Synod. He knew that slavery had existed in the Reformed Dutch Church for generations past, and that it now exists ; and that there is no prohibition of it in the form of our church-government, and that it had never been reprov'd by General Synod. He was, therefore, taken completely by surprise. He, however, attempted a reply, and among other things, reminded the Synod that, as a judicatory of the Church of Christ, they were bound to administer its government according to the laws and the principles taught us in God's holy word ; and that, as there was no prohibition of the holding of slaves, and nothing whatever in that holy word to warrant our refusal to form an ecclesiastical connection with these German brethren, we ought to assent to their proposal by receiving and incorporating them with our Church.

At the late meeting of Synod in October, in the city of New-York, the question of receiving this Classis was again considered. On the third day of the session of Synod, a motion was made and carried in the affirmative to lay the whole subject upon the table ; the vote at first standing 44 ayes and 41 nays. The ayes and nays were called for, and the vote then resulted in 50 ayes and 47 noes. The Commissioner from the Classis of North-Carolina considered this vote as clearly exhibiting the feelings of a majority of the Synod towards the Classis, and withdrew from its sessions. He also expressed to the

Chairman of the Committee of Correspondence his desire that he would do nothing more in relation to this business, and received from him the assurance that he would comply with his request. When, therefore, on the following day, this matter was called up, he stated to the Synod, that he considered the vote on the motion to lay this whole subject on the table as decisive, and that he had promised the Commissioner from North-Carolina that he would take no further part in any doings of the Synod on this question. The following resolution was finally adopted :

"Whereas, It is evident from the opinions expressed on this floor, that the Synod can not unite cordially in receiving the Classis of North-Carolina within the limits of our Church; and whereas the Synod desire to treat the Classis of North-Carolina with the courtesy and kindness due to respected brethren, therefore

"Resolved, That the Commissioner of the Classis of North-Carolina be requested to withdraw his papers."

On the second day of the sessions of Synod, it being the order of the day to take this subject up, the Chairman of the Committee on Correspondence delivered, with the exception of a few passages which he omitted when speaking before the Synod, the following

A D D R E S S .

MR. PRESIDENT : Two principal objections have been made against receiving into our Church the Classis of North-Carolina. The first objection is, that if we do so, we shall destroy the peace of our Church, and introduce among ourselves distraction and division by the agitation of the slavery question. The second objection is, that slaveholding is a sin, and that therefore, we ought not to admit slaveholders into our Church. I shall attempt, first of all, to show that slaveholding is not a sin, and that therefore, there is no reason to exclude slaveholders, simply because they are slaveholders, from union and communion with our Church. If this is established, then both objections necessarily fail: for it would be alike absurd and wicked to disturb the peace of the Church for that which the Scriptures teach us is not a sin, and which was no bar to church-fellowship with the Apostles of Christ. Let it be re-

marked that we admit slavery is *an evil*, much to be lamented ; but we deny that it is, as has been asserted, a sin against God and a crime against man.

I. THE HOLDING OF A SLAVE NOT A SIN.

It has been said that "American Slavery is at war with the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, natural justice, and Christianity"—"that slavery is a sin against God and a crime against man, etc."* To these bold statements we reply, that the mass of the American people have never considered the holding of slaves as at war with the Declaration of Independence ; that the Supreme Court of the Nation has declared that it is not against the Constitution of the United States ; and that it is not against natural justice and Christianity, we shall now endeavor to prove. We admit that it is an evil much to be lamented, but we deny that it is a sin against God and a crime against man.

As I am addressing the Supreme Ecclesiastical Court of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, my final appeal shall be to the Holy Scriptures as the inspired word of God, the only infallible and perfect rule of right and wrong, truth and error, in matters of religious faith and duty. We all profess to believe that "the law and the testimony of God" are the standard of duty and the rule of faith, and that if any "speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

That the holding of slaves is not a sin we prove from the following passages of Scripture :

1. 1 Tim. 6 : 1-5 : "Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren ; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort. If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness ; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and

* See 13th Annual Report of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, pp. 3 and 16.

strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself."

We begin with the New Testament to obviate an objection that might be urged if we should begin with the Old Testament, that the Christian dispensation has greater light and freedom and privileges than were enjoyed under the Jewish dispensation, and that therefore, though slavery might have lawfully existed under the latter, that can not be pleaded in favor of its existing under the former. Our endeavor will be to show that they both entirely agree on the point before us.

The term "servants" in this passage of sacred Scripture is in the original Greek, "δοῦλοι," the primary meaning of which, Robinson in his Greek and English Lexicon of the New Testament, gives as, "a bondman, slave, servant, pr. by birth; diff. from ἀνδράποδον, one enslaved in war."—He says: "In a family the δοῦλος was one *bound to serve, a slave*, and was the property of his master, 'a living possession,' as Aristotle calls him."—Schleusner gives as the meaning of the term—1. proprie: servus, minister, homo non liber, nec sui juris et opponitur τῷ ἐλεύθερος, that is, "its first and proper signification is that of a slave, a serving-man, a man who is not free and at his own disposal." But to put his meaning beyond doubt, the Apostle adds the words, "under *the yoke*," which is an emblem of servitude or of the rule to which any one is subject. He here unquestionably speaks of slaves who are under bondage to their masters. Bloomfield says: "The commentators are not sufficiently aware of the strength of this expression, in which there is a blending of two expressions to put the case in its strongest point of view (supposing even the harshest bondage) in order to make the injunction to obedience the more forcible." These slaves the Apostle commands to "count their own masters, whether heathen or Christians or Jews, worthy of all honor," and the reason that he gives for this is, "that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed." It was lawful by the law of Moses, to make of the heathen bondmen for life, and to hold their children in bondage. But not so with one who was born a Jew. He was permitted to serve only for six years, and it is quite possible that there were some false teachers who asserted that,

as no Jew was to remain a slave for life, so ought no Christian.

This sentiment, if it had prevailed among those slaves who were Christians, would have caused them to despise and hate their masters, and to withhold from them the respect and obedience which they owed to them. They would thus bring a reproach on the Gospel as if it were a doctrine that taught men contempt for their superiors, and disobedience to their lawful commands. From speaking of the duty which slaves owe to their masters in general, the Apostle passes on to speak to those who have believing masters who are their brethren in Christ. Here the questions whether the holding of slaves is a sin, and whether we should hold Christian communion with slaveholders, are fairly met. Does the Apostle then teach the slaves that they ought to be free? that their Christian masters sin in holding them in bondage? and does he, with apostolic authority and in the name of Jesus Christ, command the masters to give them their freedom? He does nothing of the kind. He not only does not require these Christian masters to set their slaves at liberty, but he speaks of them as "faithful and beloved" brethren, "partakers of the benefit," and for this very reason he exhorts Christian slaves not to despise them, but rather to do them service. It seems impossible for the question before us to be more fully and directly settled. But the Apostle proceeds further. He says that "if any man teach otherwise," that is, if there is any Abolitionist among you, any Immediate Emancipationist, who says that no Christian can, without sin, hold a slave; that if he holds any, he is bound in duty immediately to liberate them, and if he does not, then true Christians are bound to refuse church-fellowship and communion with him lest they should partake of his sin—if any man teach these things, then he does "not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness." This we should suppose would have been a sufficient rebuke. But to show the criminality of the doctrine of these early Abolitionists in the Christian church, the Apostle proceeds to say, that he who teaches their doctrine "is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of

the truth, supposing that gain is godliness." He, then, in a most marked manner, shows the falseness and danger of their sentiments by commanding Timothy, "from such withdraw thyself," that is, hold no intercourse with them. We shall not inquire how far this precept extends, nor whether it is a prohibition against holding church communion with Abolitionists; nor whether the Apostle does not mean to teach us that their sentiments are so revolutionary, so subversive of the established order of society, so calculated to produce discontent and resentment in the minds of the slaves as to endanger not only public but domestic peace and safety, and to produce by stirring up the slaves to insurrection, massacres and horrors, like those of the Massacres of St. Domingo, in the year 1790. Certain it is, that he commands us to withdraw from them.

2. We now turn to the Old Testament. We are informed, Gen. 17 : 1-14, that when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord again ratified the Covenant which he had made with him, and instituted circumcision as the sacramental sign of the Covenant. He commanded : "He that is eight days old among you, every man-child, in your generations—he that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised." (V. 12, 13.) "He that is bought with thy money," means the bought slave, and to such God commanded the sign of his covenant to be administered. Here then God took Abraham, a slaveholder, his children and his bought slaves into covenant with himself without expressing the slightest disapprobation of his holding slaves, but in the fullest manner authorizing him to retain them as a portion of his family or household by taking him and them into covenant with him. Abraham was a large slaveholder, for we are told, Gen. 14 : 14, 15, that he armed three hundred and eighteen of his slaves to pursue the kings who had captured Lot; and the servant whom he commissioned to procure a wife for Isaac, in recounting to the family of Rebecca the great wealth of Abraham said : "The Lord hath blessed my master greatly, and he is become great; and he hath given him flocks and herds, and silver and gold, and men-servants and maid-servants, and camels and asses." (Gen. 24 : 35.) Here *men-servants*—the original term means servants who are bought, or inherited slaves—such men-servants and maid-servants are enumer-

ated as a part of the property belonging to Abraham—property which the Lord hath given him—and in the bestowal of which the Lord had blessed him, and the possession of which Abraham's servant urged as a reason for Rebecca marrying his son.

But what is the character that is given to Abraham? The Apostle James tells us that this slaveholding Abraham "was called *the friend of God*." (Jas. 2 : 23.) The Apostle Paul teaches us that he was "the father of all them that believe." (Rom. 4 : 11.) In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, to teach us the wonderful change that death made in the condition of the poor beggar, Christ tells us that "he was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." (Luke 16 : 22.)

The Covenant which we are considering, was made with Abraham and with his children that should come after him in their generations, for an everlasting Covenant. It was by this covenant that God first organized his visible Church on earth. He and his descendants were now separated from the world by God himself, and were taken into a special covenant-relation with him. The promise given was: "I will be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee," and as the sign and the seal of this Covenant, circumcision was instituted; and thenceforth the descendants of Abraham, through Isaac and Jacob, became "an holy people unto the Lord their God;" and the Lord chose them to be a peculiar people to himself above all nations that were upon the earth. (Deut. 14 : 2.) A special promise given to Abraham was: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." This promised seed was Christ. Because of the rejection of Christ by the Jews, the natural descendants of Abraham, they became an apostate church, and the kingdom of God was taken away from them and given to a nation or a race of men bringing forth the fruits thereof. They ceased to be the peculiar people of God, and thenceforth the middle wall of partition, the ceremonial law that separated the Jew from the Gentile, was broken down by Christ; and believing Gentiles were admitted into the Church along with believing Jews. The covenant, however, was the same, and through Christ the blessing of Abraham comes on the Gentiles, for they are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, and so they are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. Circumcision taught the Jew to look forward by faith to a coming

Messiah to save him from sin and make him a child of God. Baptism teaches all believers in Christ to look back and rejoice that the promised seed of Abraham, from whom he receives the blessings of salvation, has come. Circumcision now on the part of the Jews is the standing testimony against them that they reject Christ, and so are rejected by him. Baptism is the standing testimony that we believe in Christ as the seed of Abraham, in whom it was promised that all nations should be blessed. *Before* the coming of Christ, circumcision, and *since* his coming, baptism distinguish from the world the organized visible Church of God, which has existed from the institution of circumcision, and will exist till the end of time. But this covenant was made with a slaveholder, and this visible Church was organized in his family, and his slaves received the sign of the covenant along with himself and his children.

Moreover, the non-holding of slaves has never been made a term or condition of church-fellowship. Bingham, in his *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, informs us that, "We find by the author of the Constitutions, under the name of the Apostles,* that in the first ages of the Christian Church, one part of the inquiry that was made concerning those who offered themselves to baptism was, whether they were slaves or freemen. If they were slaves to a heathen, they were only taught their obligations to please their master, that the word of God might not be blasphemed; and the master had no further concern in their baptism, as being himself an infidel; but if the master were a Christian, then the testimony of the master was first to be required concerning the life and conversation of his slave before he could be admitted to the privilege of baptism. If he gave a laudable account of him he was received; if otherwise, he was rejected till he approved himself to his master. So far in those days it was thought necessary and serviceable to religion to grant Christian masters a power over their slaves, that without their testimony and approbation they could not be accepted as fit candidates for baptism."† So far, too, we may add, were they from considering the holding of slaves to be sinful in itself.

* Supposed to be of the second and third centuries.

† Book 11th, chap. 5, sec. 4, p. 502. See also *Southern Presbyterian Review*, Vol. 2, No. 4, pp. 582-583.

3. Our third argument to prove that the holding of slaves is not sinful, is derived from Exod. 20 : 17. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house ; thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's." This precept establishes the right of property, and forbids not only the unjust depriving the owner of his lawful property, but even the secret desire to do so. It strikes down at once into the dust Communism and Socialism. It teaches us that there is a division, and that there are rights of property ; that there are masters and that there are slaves, and bids us to respect the right of the master, and not to covet his man-servant or his maid-servant.

The division of property and the security of the owner in the possession of it, lie at the foundation of civilized and Christian life, and where they are unknown men are wandering tribes of barbarians, ignorant, rapacious, and debased. To cultivate the arts and sciences that embellish and exalt human life, and especially to have colleges and churches, the right of property must be respected, and the desire and the attempt to deprive others of property which the law of God and the law of the land have made it lawful for them to hold, is to strike a blow at the very existence of civilization and Christianity. We admit that there are great inequalities in the possession of property and in the conditions of men, and that there are many evils to be deplored. But with all their inequalities and evils, the worst despotism on earth is to be preferred to a state of constant anarchy and consequently of constant warfare. Oppressive as despotism may be, yet under it the masses of men live in comparative quiet and security. Under anarchy no man is safe in the possession of life or property. God therefore commands us to respect the right of property, to leave the lawful owner of it in the undisturbed possession of it, even though it be a man-servant or a maid-servant. What though we may think slavery unjust, yet there it is, it actually exists, for wise and good reasons God permits it, and he commands us not to seek by force to remove it. He has sent forth no messengers of violence and of war, no spiritual knight-errants to fight with carnal weapons, and by force and bloodshed to remove the evils and oppressions that exist, or that we may imagine to exist among men. This was the plan of Mohammed, who went forth with sword and fire to

punish and destroy all who did not agree with him in what he considered truth and right. This was the plan of the French infidel propagandists of 1793 ; and this we fear is the plan of many amongst us, and we regret to say of some who are called ministers of the Gospel, a name which they do not deserve and should not bear. No, "the weapons of our warfare, not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong-holds." We are ministers of peace, not of war, and they who would put down what they consider wrong among us by violence and war, might have made good followers of Mohammed and able allies to French infidel republicans ; but we can not admit their claim to be the ministers of the Gospel of the Prince of Peace.

4. Our fourth argument to prove that slavery is not sinful, is derived from the ceremonial and political law given to the Israelites by God, as well as the moral law. One of the most remarkable of the institutions of the Levitical law, was the passover which commemorated the deliverance of the Israelites from their bondage in Egypt. We are told that the Lord said to Moses and Aaron : "This is the ordinance of the passover ; there shall no stranger eat thereof. But every man's *servant that is bought for money*, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof. A foreigner and an hired servant shall not eat thereof." When the bought servant was circumcised he became a member of his master's family, and was entitled to various privileges which were not granted to the foreigner who was a hired servant. He became one of the covenant people of God, for his circumcision signified this to him ; and if he was *an Israelite indeed*, then it was to him, as well as to Abraham, "a seal of the righteousness of faith."

Another remarkable law was that of the Jubilee, which returned every fiftieth year, when every Hebrew servant was set free with his children, and was restored to his own family and the possessions of his father. But it was not so with servants who were foreigners. The law in relation to them was as follows : "Both thy bond-men and thy bond-maids which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are round about you ; of them shall ye buy bond-men and bond-maids. Moreover, of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy and of their families that are with you which they begat in your land, and they shall be your possession ; and

ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you to inherit them for a possession. They shall be your bond-men for ever." (Lev. 25 : 44-46.) It is remarkable that this law was given within the space of the first year after the departure of the Israelites out of Egypt.* But in all the history of their deliverance from the cruel bondage in which they were there held, no mention is made of any slaves among them ; nor when we consider their abject poverty is it probable that they possessed any. It seems probable, therefore, that the laws relating to slaveholding were given to them in anticipation of the existence of slavery among them after they were settled in the land of Canaan ; and if so, they were plainly permitted by God to hold slaves. When Abraham was taken into covenant by God, the holding of slaves was fully established, and had he even wished and attempted to do away with it, we have no reason to suppose that he would have succeeded, but would have exposed himself and his family to the resentment of those among whom he dwelt, and that therefore God permitted him to hold slaves. But this can not be said of the laws in relation to slavery which were given to the Israelites. They were then separated from all other nations, alone and in the wilderness, they were under the special protection of God and had nothing to fear from any of the neighboring nations. But instead of forbidding them to hold slaves, he expressly permitted them to do so. We might produce other arguments from the laws given by Moses to the Israelites ; but we think that enough has been presented to show that the holding of slaves was not forbidden by God, and was no bar to the enjoying of church privileges.

It may be objected, however, that under the Old-Testament dispensation many things were permitted which are not tolerated under the New-Testament dispensation, a dispensation of greater light and purity and privileges than belonged to the old dispensation. Let us then examine the New Testament and inquire what are its teachings on this subject.

1. Our first remark is, that Christ and his Apostles in the strongest manner assert the divine inspiration and binding authority of Moses and the Prophets, that is, of the Old-Testament Scriptures. On this point there was no dispute between them and the Jews. It was Jesus Christ the Son of God who

* Compare Exodus 19 : 1, with Num. 10 : 11.

gave to the Israelites their laws in the wilderness, and who spake by his spirit in the prophets,* who was again visibly present among the Jews in the humble form of the Man of Nazareth, explaining and enforcing the laws which he had before given to them. The Law of Ten Commandments is referred to and argued from by both Christ and his Apostles, as the Law of God of universal and perpetual obligation, and consequently the tenth command is in as full force at the present day as when it was first given, and the right of the master to his man-servant and maid-servant remains as strong as at the first. Moreover, all true believers in Christ are children of Abraham, and so under and interested in the Covenant which God made with him. "Know ye, therefore," says the Apostle, "that they which are of faith the same are the children of Abraham. . . . So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. . . . If ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Gal. 3 : 7, 9, 29.) It is under that covenant which God made with Abraham to be a God to him and to his seed after him, and of which circumcision, before the death of Christ, was the sign, and baptism now is and has been since his death, that the visible Church is now placed, and believing masters with their believing slaves are now as they ever have been entitled to the sign and privileges of the covenant.

2. Our Lord repeatedly spoke of slaves, especially in several of his parables, without the slightest intimation that he condemned slavery, and in such a way as plainly showed that he considered it lawful. Among others we refer to the parable of the Unmerciful Servant, Matt. 18 : 23-35. Of the Talents, Matt. 25 : 14-30. Of the Unprofitable Servants, Luke 17 : 7, 10.

3. We are told, Matt. 8 : 5-13, that a Centurion came to Jesus beseeching him to heal his sick servant. When Jesus offered to come and heal him, the centurion replied : "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he

* Luke 24 : 27. Acts 24 : 14, etc.

cometh ; and to my servant, (slave, δούλος,) Do this, and he doeth it." Here was a heathen, high in office, acknowledging to Christ that he was a slaveholder, and asking of him to heal his servant. If the holding of slaves had been sinful, Jesus would, we doubt not, have so informed him. Instead of this he highly commended his faith. He marvelled and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. Did he say that a slaveholder could not be a Christian? that he could not be saved? that he would not own him as his disciple? He said just the reverse. "I say unto you that many shall come from the east and west and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven," plainly intimating that this believing Roman centurion should be one of them.

The divinely-inspired writers of the Books of the New Testament imitate their Master, for while they address commands, exhortations, and admonitions to masters and slaves, they do not give the slightest intimation that slaveholding is sinful. We shall select some of the passages which refer to this subject :

Eph. 6 : 5-8.—Servants, be obedient unto them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart as unto Christ ; not with eyeservice as menpleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart ; with good will doing service, as to the Lord and not to men : knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.

Coloss. 3 : 22-25.—Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice as menpleasers ; but in singleness of heart, fearing God : and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men ; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance : for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done : and there is no respect of persons.

Titus 2 : 9, 10.—Exhort servants to be obedient to their own masters, and to please them in all things ; not answering again ; not purloining, but showing all good fidelity ; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

1 Peter 2 : 18-21.—Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear ; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called.*

The Apostles fully recognize the right of the masters in their

* In all the above quotations from the Epistles of the Apostle Paul, he uses the term δούλοι, bond slaves — the Apostle Peter uses the term δούλῃται, which also sometimes means slaves. See Luke 16 : 13.

servants, and to their obedience and service, and exhort the servants to yield these to their masters, as their duty and for conscience toward God.

We think that we have fully established from Scripture our position, that the holding of slaves is not a sin. We might indeed have pursued a shorter course, and have challenged the Abolitionists to produce a single law of God forbidding it. We are told that "*whosoever committeth sin transgresseth the law, for sin is the transgression of the law!*" (1 John 3 : 4,) and that "*sin is not imputed when there is no law.*" (Rom. 5 : 13.) Slavery is constantly spoken of in the sacred Scriptures, but there is no direct prohibition of it, no special law against it, and therefore it does not come under the definition of sin given by the inspired apostle. We can not therefore but consider the harsh and bitter denunciations of slaveholders as both unwarranted and anti-scriptural.

Before leaving this part of our subject, we think it right to refer to two cases of fugitive slaves. The one is that of Onesimus, who ran away from his master, Philemon, who was a Christian, and had been converted through the ministry of Paul. Though a slaveholder, the Apostle commends him for his love and faith toward the Lord Jesus and toward all saints. Onesimus, his fugitive slave, came to Rome, and was there converted also under the ministry of Paul, and had, by his exemplary temper and conduct, gained his high esteem. How does Paul act under these circumstances? He was an inspired apostle, invested with authority from Christ to teach Christian doctrines and to enforce Christian duties, and therefore his conduct in this case would be a precedent to guide the Church in all future similar cases. He explicitly and fully recognized the right of Philemon, and sent back his slave, at the same time earnestly commending him to the mercy and forgiveness and Christian love of his master.

Another strong test-case is that of Hagar, the fugitive slave of Abraham. She had fled from the oppression of her mistress, Sarah. The angel of the Lord—or rather, as we think the words should be translated, the Angel-Jehovah—found her in the wilderness, and said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai. And the angel of the Lord said

unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands." (Gen. 16 : 6-9.) Here the Lord Jehovah taught Hagar her duty as a slave, to submit to and obey her mistress, and recognized the right of masters to their slaves.

We have thus far considered only the question whether slavery is a sin, and have shown that Abraham was a slaveholder when the Lord called and entered into covenant with him ; that at the first organization of the visible Church of God, slaves and their children were admitted into it along with their masters, and that the sign of the covenant was equally administered to both ; that the laws which God gave to the Israelites by Moses clearly recognized the right of masters in their slaves and to their service ; that Christ and his apostles enforced these laws ; that under the Gospel dispensation slaveholders and their slaves were admitted to church-membership and its privileges ; that special commands were given to regulate the intercourse between masters and their slaves ; and that the apostle Paul, and even the Angel-Jehovah himself, sent back to their owners slaves who had run away from them. It is evident from this that God has not made the holding of slaves a sin, and that to attempt to exclude all slaveholders, simply as and because they are such, from church communion, is a usurpation of unlawful power against the covenant and the law of God. We have made our appeal to the Scriptures of truth, heartily assenting to the teachings of the confession of faith of our Church, which says : " We believe in the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures to be the only rule of faith. We believe that those Holy Scriptures fully contain the word of God, and that whatsoever man ought to believe unto salvation is sufficiently taught therein. . . . Therefore we reject with all our hearts whatsoever doth not agree with this infallible rule which the apostles have taught us, saying, ' Try the spirits, whether they are of God. Likewise, ' If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house.' " (Art. 1, § 7.)

II. REASONS FOR THE PERMISSION OF SLAVERY.

Since God has permitted slavery to exist in his Church, and has made it the subject of special legislation, there must be not only sufficient, but good and wise reasons for his so doing.

Should we be unable to discover these reasons, it would be our duty to bow in humble acquiescence, assured that he ever acts with infinite wisdom and goodness.

But there are most important reasons for what He has done, some of which we shall now attempt to specify. Slavery is one of the bitter effects of the fall, and of the great wickedness of men. The only effectual remedy for these evils, is the redemption of men from sin by our Lord Jesus Christ; and this redemption is applied to them through the instrumentality of the word, and of the ministers of God which he has given to the Church.

At the very time when God pronounced on man the sentence of death, immediately after his first sin, he said to the Serpent: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." It is here foretold that there would be constant enmity through the whole period of the power of "that old Serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world," (Rev. 12:9;) together with wicked men, whom he rules, and who are called "the children of the devil," (1 John 3:10,) and the Lord Jesus Christ, the seed of the woman. It is foretold, that in this contest the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, that it should inflict a mortal blow on his power; and that the serpent should bruise his heel, that it should injure his human nature, in which he dwelt and trod upon the earth. This was accomplished, when Christ "through death destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and delivered them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." (Heb. 2:14, 15.) This promise gave the first gleam of light and hope to our fallen race. All the cruelties and oppressions and deaths that have ever existed among men, have been caused by their apostasy from God, and the delusions and temptations of the devil. The remedy for all this is the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. This is the remedy that God has provided, and there is no other. The universal extension of the Gospel of Christ, in its purity and power, over the whole world, is that which alone can remove the evils of the fall.

This truth was more fully revealed when God gave to Abraham the promise: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth

be blessed." The exposition of this promise is given to us by the Apostle, when he says: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." He says: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us. . . . That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." (Gal. 3:16, 13, 14.) This blessing of Abraham, God communicates to the world through the Church, and a clear understanding of the origin, the nature, the privileges, and the design of the visible Church, which began in the family of Abraham, will greatly assist us to form right conclusions on the subject of slavery.

It had its origin at a time when the world was full of idolatry and wickedness, and seemed to be fast hastening to the same state of violence and crime as existed before the flood. Then, God interposed in wrath, and, with the exception of Noah and his family, destroyed the whole race for their sins. Now, however, he interposed in mercy, not to destroy, but to reform the race. To arrest the wickedness that was spreading in all directions, and prevent its universal prevalence, he called Abraham, and entered into covenant with him. He appointed circumcision, as its sign and seal that he would be a God to him and to his seed after him; and he commanded him to administer this sign and seal of the covenant—not to the servants that he had hired, but to him that is "bought with money of any stranger which is not of thy seed." (Gen. 17:12.) Does the Abolitionist burn with indignation against the wickedness of slaveholders, and of those who do not join in his wrath and denunciations against them? Does he cry: "Let justice be done though the heavens fall?" Let him look back and see this justice done in the terrible desolations of the flood. But did this reform man? It is easy to declaim against popular evils and popular sins to which we ourselves have no personal temptations; but it may be laid down as a sure maxim, that the man who does not resist and repel the temptations to which he is personally exposed; who declaims against the sins of others with whom he has no personal connection, and from whom he has no reason to fear personal evil, or expect personal profit,

while he readily complies with whatever is popular in the Church or the world, and is ready, and even foremost, to extol whatever the community among whom he lives extols, and to decry whatever it decries, would be one of the strongest advocates of slavery among slaveholders, and one of the loudest demanders of abolition among the enemies of slavery. But let us suppose that slavery was exterminated by violence, and that every slaveholder was compelled to relinquish all his slaves, would this better the condition of the world? Would this arrest oppression and injustice, and make all men benevolent and upright? It would merely set loose a multitude of ignorant, unprincipled, immoral men, and give them the power to follow the promptings of their evil hearts. No permanent and beneficial reformation can be effected, except through the mercy and grace of God in Christ, and these are usually bestowed through the instrumentality of his Church.

2. A slave belongs to the lowest condition of men, and is often exposed to injuries and oppression from his master without being able to obtain relief. To mitigate the evils of his condition, to teach his master that though he is a slave, he is yet a man, an immortal and accountable being like himself; to assert his rights, and shelter him from injury, God took him into covenant with himself, and along with his master and his master's children, commanded him to be circumcised. He thus taught the master, that while he permitted him to retain the slave as his property, and to require from him labor, and obedience to all his lawful commands, he must beware how he oppressed and injured him; that he, as the covenant-God of his slave, would be the avenger of his wrongs, and that he required of him, as the master, to respect the rights, and endeavor to promote the spiritual welfare of his slave, and to treat him not only as a man, but as a brother in the Lord.

To the slave, too, who was bought from among the heathen, it was a privilege of unspeakable value thus to be admitted to the covenant of the people of God. Not only was the condition of the slave among the heathen much more degraded and wretched than among the Israelites, but he lived and died in spiritual darkness and hopelessness. But among the Hebrews he was placed under the protection of the covenant and law of God. He was taught that he was not a poor,

degraded, wretched, and friendless outcast; but that the eternal God was his father and his protector, who admitted him to the blessings and the privileges of his covenant, and gave him a name and a place in his Church. How great was the privilege, how rich were the blessings bestowed on him!

Among the laws that God gave to protect the slave from the cruelty of the master, one was the following: "If a man smite his servant or his maid with a rod, and he die under his hand, he shall be surely punished. Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished for he is his money." Another law was, that: "If a man smite the eye of his servant, or the eye of his maid, that it perish, he shall let him go free for his eye's sake. And if he smite out his man-servant's tooth or his maid-servant's tooth, he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake." (Exod. 21:20, 21, 26, 27.) Some suppose that the meaning of the words "he shall be punished," in the law relative to beating a slave, is that he shall be punished with death; but many commentators think that it means that he shall be punished at the discretion of the magistrate, according to the circumstances of the case. It is, however, implied in this case, that the master has beaten his slave with a proper and usual instrument of correction, that he did not intend to murder him, and that the loss of property and of services is part of his punishment. We learn, too, that the mutilation of any member of the body of a slave by his master entitled him to freedom.

The Hebrews were commanded to give to their slaves the rest of the Sabbath, and to allow them to partake along with themselves, and their sons and their daughters, of the feasts which were made of the second tithes. (Deut. 12:17, 18; 16:11.) Thus they were not only protected from the cruelty of their masters, but admitted to partake in their most sacred festivals, and to rejoice along with them.

3. It would be interesting to compare the state of slaves among the Hebrews, with their state in other and heathen nations, and to show its superiority. A writer on Hebrew antiquities has correctly remarked, that though "they were sometimes the subjects of undue severity of treatment, and of sufferings in various ways, (Jer. 34:8-22,) still it can not be denied that their condition was better among the Hebrews

than among some other nations, as may be learnt from their well-known rebellions against the Greeks and Romans. Nor is it at all wonderful that the Hebrews differed from other nations in the treatment of their slaves, in a way so much to their credit, when we consider that in other countries there was no Sabbath for the slave, no day of rest, and no laws sanctioned by the Divinity." (Jahn, §172.)

From the few intimations that are given us on the subject, it seems that pious masters, before the coming of Christ, treated their slaves with strict justice and humanity; that the condition of their slaves was easy, and that they were not only contented, but often strongly attached to their masters. Who can read the interesting prayers of the eldest servant of Abraham, his fidelity in the discharge of the duty committed to him, and the terms in which he speaks of his master, without the conviction that strong friendship towards each other existed in both the master and the slave? (Gen. 24.) Holy Job had his slaves, and numerous slaves too; but that he was far from oppressing them, and that he rightly discharged his duty to them, is manifest from his solemn protestation before God: "If I did despise the cause of my man-servant or of my maid servant when they contended with me, what then shall I do when God riseth up; and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him? Did not He that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb?" (Job 31: 13, 15.)

Such were the laws which God gave to the Hebrews, which continued throughout their whole commonwealth, under which Christ, as the Son of Man, and his holy apostles, lived, and to which, in all their teachings and writings, we find no objection—not a single word of their injustice, or of the propriety of their repeal, or even of their amendment. What, too, is more remarkable, is the fact that, if slavery is unjust, Christ, in his comment on, and explanation of the law of Moses, in his Sermon on the Mount, does not give the slightest intimation of it.

When we turn to the inspired writings of the Apostles, writings addressed to fully organized Christian churches, whose government and discipline were administered by the laws of Christ's kingdom, do we find that they denounced slaveholding as a sin? Do they require a protest against slavery, or enjoin on masters

the immediate emancipation of their slaves as a condition of admittance to their communion, or of continuance in it? There is not a syllable of the kind in all their writings. The Apostle having exhorted slaves to the faithful discharge of the duties which they owed to their masters, from the fear of God, and a regard to his glory, commands the masters to do their duty to the slaves in the same manner. He says: "And ye masters, do the same thing unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven, neither is there respect of persons with him." (Eph. 6:9.) "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven." (Col. 4:1.)

The position, then, in which slavery is now placed by the laws of Christ is this: They concede to masters the right of ownership of their slaves, and at the same time they remind them that there are important duties which they owe to them as immortal, and many of them as redeemed creatures, whom God has taken into covenant with himself, and that they must give account to him for the manner in which they discharge or violate these duties. They command the slave to submit to the rule of his master, and to perform the duties which he owes to him with fidelity, and in the fear of God. To both the master and the slave, they say: "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." (Luke 6:31.) We are aware that this passage has been interpreted to mean, that as no man desires to be held in slavery, so the slaveholder should gratify the desires of the slave and make him free. This is entirely changing the rule, and making it to read thus: "Whatsoever *others* would that you should do to them that do ye to them." But it is: "As *ye* would that others should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." We have no right to desire others to give up their lawful rights, or to do unjustly, for our sakes; nor does Christ intend that we shall sacrifice our rights, or fail to do our duties, for the sake of gratifying the unreasonable or unlawful and sinful desires of others.

Take the case of a murderer and a judge or a jurymen. Would it be right for a judge or a jurymen to reason thus: "If I were in the case of this murderer I should wish to be acquitted, but I ought to do to him what were I in his circumstances, and he in mine, I would wish him to do to me, and therefore I will

acquit him"? The meaning of the precept is, that in our conduct to others we should have a constant regard to the law of God, and act towards them with the same benevolence, truth, and justice, as we have a right to wish them to act towards us; thus conscientiously performing to each other the duties belonging to our relative positions and conditions in life. The law of God, and not the desires of others is the rule of our conduct. A covetous man, through the inordinate love of money, runs deeply in debt to an honest man. He is exceedingly unwilling to pay the debt, and, though he has ample means to do so, yet most earnestly wishes his creditor to relinquish it. Does this precept require the honest and laborious creditor to do so, and to act on such reasonings as this: "This man who owes me a large sum of money, though he is able to pay it, yet wishes me to relinquish my claim to it; true, indeed, it is the gain of years of honest industry and frugality, and the loss of it will reduce me to poverty; but yet, if I were in his circumstances, and had his disposition, and if he were in my circumstances, I should have the same desires as his, and therefore it is my duty to comply with his desires, and relinquish my claim to the debt." If we should thus interpret and act on this precept, we should introduce a frightful state of society. The rule contemplates a continuance of its established order; that the parent shall retain his authority over his child, and the child revere and obey his parent; that the husband shall be kind and faithful to his wife, and the wife shall be affectionate and faithful to her husband; that the master shall be just and merciful to his slave, and the slave be obedient and faithful to his master.

In the Epistle of Paul to Philemon, we have an admirable illustration of this rule, as applicable to the case of a master and his runaway slave. Having declared his strong affection for Philemon, the high esteem in which he held his Christian character, and the joy and consolation he received from the accounts which he heard of his kindness to the people of God, and usefulness in the Church; he, in the gentlest and kindest terms intercedes with him for Onesimus, his slave. He reminds Philemon of his authority, as an Apostle of Christ, to command him, but he tells him that for love's sake he would rather beseech him. He reminds him that he was Paul the aged. He

had grown gray in the service of Christ, and in the midst of perils, and persecutions, and prisons, and poverty, and stonings, and scourges, and shipwrecks, had triumphantly carried forward the banner of the Cross, and won thousands to Christ. And who is he that this intrepid Apostle so humbly beseeches? Is he a man who is claiming what does not belong to him? who is insisting on what is wrong and sinful in itself? And does Paul quail before this man! Does he who stood undaunted before Rome's cruel tyrant, Nero, cower before an obscure church-member, who wickedly claims what it is sinful for him to possess? Had this been the fact, had God's law forbidden Philemon to hold his slave, would this holy Apostle, whose soul was adamant, and the lightning-flash of whose eye made Felix tremble, would he for an instant have shrunk from telling Philemon that he had no right to hold a slave? that slaveholding is in itself a sin? and if he had not relinquished all claim to the slave, would he not have denounced against him the severest vengeance of Almighty God? This would be the course which some modern reformers would have prescribed to him; but the course which he pursued was directly the opposite: and either this holy and inspired Apostle erred, or they are in grievous error. He knew that Philemon had rights; he admitted those rights. He knew that, by the Roman law, he had the power to punish his slave, not only with scourges, but with death. (Juvenal 6:219.) He knew, too, that even a good man might be hurried to excesses by passion and resentment. He, therefore, used entreaties. He says: "Though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient, yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee." Surely, if Philemon had one spark of noble, generous Christian feeling in his heart, he must have been astonished and humbled at such an address from such a one as he knew Paul to be, the aged Apostle of Christ, illustrious for his services and his sufferings, honored far above all others by God; who had already been rapt up into the third heaven, and now, close on the verge of life, stood ready, and waiting for the summons to ascend to his Saviour and his God, and receive his unfading crown of righteousness—that he should tenderly and earnestly beseech him! And for whom does he beseech him? Why, for his poor runaway slave, Onesimus. But the Apostle

does not now speak of him as a slave ; he commends him as his son : thus intimating to Philemon, that if he had any respect or love for him, the father, he must show it by kindness for his sake to his son. "I beseech thee for my son, Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds ; whom I have sent again. Thou, therefore, receive him that is mine own bowels." What tenderness ! what meekness ! what humility ! But we can not pursue our remarks further on this wonderful epistle.

Suffice it to say, that both Philemon, the master, and Onesimus, the slave, had been converted to Christ through the instrumentality of Paul, and he, reminding Philemon of this, exhorted him to receive his returned slave, "not now as a servant," (slave,) "but above a servant," (slave,) "a brother beloved especially to me ; but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord." No heathen, no infidel, ever could have acted thus from such principles, or have used such arguments and such motives to induce a master to treat with humanity his slaves. Yes ; there are Christians that are slaveholders ; there are slaves that are Christians ; and there are Christians who are the friends of slaveholders and their slaves ; and who are willing, like Paul, to hail them as brethren in Christ Jesus, and to sit down with them at the sacramental table of their common Lord and Saviour. When Philemon received from Onesimus himself, and had read this epistle from Paul, with what emotions must he have received his slave ! Methinks that with gushing tears, and a throbbing heart, he clasped him in his arms, and welcomed him back to his home ; and when at the close of that day he and his household bowed in worship before God, he thanked and praised him with the liveliest gratitude, and with his whole soul, for his conversion and return. You, Christian brethren, who yourselves have tasted of the grace and goodness of the Lord, can judge of his feelings. Through the benign influences of the Gospel, the bitterness of servitude is lessened and sweetened, and "the brother of low degree rejoices in that he is exalted, but the rich in that he is made low." (James 1:9.) Philemon after his conversion was a better master, and Onesimus after his return was a better slave.

The mitigating influence of Christianity was shown by the

conduct of the first Christian emperor of Rome, Constantine the Great, who abolished the punishment of slaves by crucifixion, and facilitated their manumission, which before was attended with great difficulties and no small expense, but which he rendered easy, and no ways chargeable.*

I owe an apology to Synod for trespassing so long on their time; but I trust that the importance of the subject will be my excuse. Permit me, however, to remark, that our Southern Christian brethren are fully impressed with their duty to communicate the Gospel to their slaves, and to give them suitable religious instructions and privileges. None can more strongly insist on this duty than does the *Southern Presbyterian Review*, a very able and excellent work, published at Columbia, S. C. It says, speaking of their slaves:

"We still bear in mind that they are men, and have immortal souls; that Christ shed his blood to redeem them as well as ourselves, and that we are put in charge of their training as that of our own children, for his kingdom of glory. It is, then, as plain as daylight that Christianity condemns all laws of the State, and all ideas and practices of individuals which put aside the immortality of the slave, and regard him in any other light than that of a moral and responsible fellow-creature of our own. We have no hesitation in declaring that we accord with Judge O'Neill in earnestly desiring the repeal, for example, of the law against teaching the slave to read, . . . because, we conceive the law is both useless and hurtful. It is a useless law, for very many of our best citizens continually break it, or allow it to be broken in our families. Besides, very many of our slaves can read, and do teach and will teach others. . . . But the law is *hurtful*, inasmuch as it throws an obstacle in the way of that which it is plainly the wisdom of the State to foster and encourage, namely, the religious instruction of the young negro population."

The writer asserts that "Christianity, while it civilizes the slave, improves him in all parts of his character. It takes away piecemeal the mass of barbarian ignorance, superstition, and corruption. It is advantageous to their whole physical, intellectual, and moral nature. It makes the slaves better, more intelligent, industrious, tractable, trusty—better men, better servants of God, better servants of man. . . . And what is the effect of Christianity upon the master? It softens his spirit in the sternness of law and discipline, while it confirms and establishes these just bonds. Whatever was formerly harsh in the relation is gradually removed. Mutual intercourse is sweetened by it; the master is no tyrant, the slave no rebel. "Authority ceases to be severe; obedience ceases to be a task."

* Ant. Uni. Hist, vol. 15, book 3, ch. 25, pp. 576, 577.

(*Southern Presbyterian Review*, vol. 2, No. 4, pp. 579-581.) "One thing," say they, addressing their fellow-citizens of the South, "is plain. It is ours to do the duties of intelligent, decided, fearless, conscientious Christian masters, and future events we may leave with Him who will direct them well." (P. 585.)

Let us remember, that if we refuse to receive these churches into full communion with ourselves, we not only exclude the masters, but along with them their slaves; many of whom are members in full communion in the same churches with their masters, and sit down with them at the same sacramental table. It is a startling fact in the history of the Church in our country, that a Southern Aid Society has been formed in this city, (New-York,) avowedly for the purpose of supplying the deficiency of the American Home Missionary Society, who, it is said, forbear to send missionaries to our Southern and South-Western States, because they hold slaves. Can it be that they thus act because they have lost confidence in the efficacy of the Gospel, to remove and cure the sins and evils of the world, and have found an obstacle too great for it to overcome?

In reading the life of the late excellent Bishop White, of Pennsylvania, I have met with one of his letters, dated in 1811, in which he says, that there then was "danger of the extinction of the profession of Christianity among a great proportion of the people of the United States." It would seem, from the course that the Home Missionary Society pursues towards them, that they are willing that this event should happen in our Southern States. What a contrast to the conduct of Christ, who commenced his public ministry, by going among "the people who sat in darkness and in the region and shadow of death," (Matt. 4:15, 16,) and who came to save the chief of sinners. But they seem to think that our Southern brethren are in a darkness so deep, and are sinners so great, that their condition is hopeless; or that they deserve to die in their sins, without the Gospel. Dark, however, as they may consider their state to be, it is the firm conviction of the writer of this, and he speaks from personal knowledge, that the Gospel is preached in greater, and in many instances in far greater purity, and consequently with far greater power, in the pulpits of the

Southern churches generally, than it is in a large number of the Northern churches. That some of the Southern masters are cruel to their slaves he does not deny. This, however, is only admitting that there are cruel men at the South, as well as at the North. But he confidently asserts, that public sentiment in the South is strong against such cruel masters; and he believes that should such a scene occur among them as the death of "Uncle Tom," it would send a thrill of horror, and produce as strong detestation throughout our Southern as it would throughout our Northern States. Our Southern brethren complain, and they complain with truth, that "so monstrous are the misrepresentations which ignorance, malice, and fanaticism are constantly and assiduously propagating in regard to this (the slave) relation among us, that if our names were not actually written under the pictures, we should never suspect that they were intended for us." Sure we are, that withholding the Gospel from them, and refusing to hold ecclesiastical connection with them, will produce no beneficial results, while it may be attended with most disastrous consequences.

Hitherto we have, as a nation, run a career of unexampled prosperity; and, bound together by that glorious Constitution, which, under the guidance of Heaven, the wisdom and patriotism of our fathers formed, we have reposed in the peace and the safety of a mighty empire, while a glorious future opens before us. Not only do our own safety and happiness require the perpetuity of our Union, but true patriots and philanthropists throughout the world desire with intense anxiety the success of our attempt at self-government, and the dissolution of our Union would be a fearful blow to the cause of true freedom throughout the world. To ourselves it would bring ruin, for it would at once plunge us into the horrors of a civil war. And for what? Why, for the maintenance of an infidel abstraction, concerning the inalienable rights of man, in what they call a state of nature. Suppose, then, that the three millions of Southern slaves were all liberated at once, that the wishes of the Abolitionist were carried out to their full extent, what would be their condition? Would we join them to drive the Southern white men from their homes, and to seize their property, and so throw them out, with their families, houseless,

impoverished, and helpless? Or are the Abolitionists of the North prepared to receive and support these three millions of slaves? The greatest injustice and cruelty that could be done to them, would be simply to carry at once into execution that for which, *not the slaves*, but the Abolitionists are contending. And shall we, for such a mad scheme, break up our confederacy and dissolve our Union? Where is the true-hearted American that advocates this? Where is the American so ungrateful to God for the blessings of the government under which he lives, and such a traitor to his country, as to consent to the breaking up of our Union, and consequently the destruction of our own happiness, and of our usefulness to the world, that now stand in bright prospect before us? And what would be the gains of such traitorous and diabolical schemes, should they prove successful? Who would be benefited by them? Not one; while all would be losers. None can predict what disasters and crimes and sorrows would follow an event so marked by folly and wickedness. All the denunciations and slanders and bitterness of Abolitionists will never benefit the slaves of the South. These are not the methods which God employs to bless men. His Church is "the light of the world," is "the salt of the earth," by which he instructs, purifies, and elevates them.

Shall we then join hands with the Abolitionist, and disown every Christian minister, and close every church at the South, so far as in us lies, abolish from among them the Sabbath, and the worship of God, and the sacred ordinances of our religion, and leave them, in spiritual matters, in a deeper than Egyptian darkness; and this, too, for not doing what they can not do, emancipate at once all their slaves? Our brethren of the Classis of North-Carolina are the true friends of the slaves among whom they live, as well as of their masters; and are laboring, as the ministers of God, to convey to them the blessings of salvation. Christ has owned them as his ministers, and they come to us in the name of Christ, seeking to be one with us. Shall we repel them? Shall the Dutch Church, which has heretofore gloried in the reputation of its steadfastness in the truth and purity of the Gospel, and of its conservative influence amid the agitations and changes that have for years past shaken society, now abandon its conservative course,

and forfeit its conservative character? No. Let us take these, our Southern brethren, by the hand, and say to them: Christian brethren, we own and we bless you as such in the name of the Lord. We hail you in your good works, and in all your efforts to instruct and enlighten and Christianize the slaves that are among you. Our arms are open to receive you; and, while we ask the blessing of God on you and your labors, we welcome you as one with us in Christ.